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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: JORDAN TO HOST IRAQ CONFERENCE

REF: A. AMMAN 1531
[1](#)B. AMMAN 2325
[1](#)C. CAIRO 2021
[1](#)D. 04 AMMAN 9152
[1](#)E. 04 AMMAN 9411

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Jordan's official news agency, Petra, announced April 5 that the GoJ will host a conference of "senior Iraqi religious and tribal leaders" in Amman on April 22 under the patronage of King Abdullah. The conference, to be organized in cooperation between Jordan's Aal al-Bayt Institute and the Arab League, will reportedly also include leading clerics from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, the Gulf and Iran. According to the press announcement, the conference will provide "a forum for Iraqi leaders to take a crucial step towards stemming the violence in Iraq." It added that the conference is expected to culminate in a signed declaration that "fighting between Shi'ites and Sunnis has no legitimate basis."

[1](#)2. (C) King Abdullah discussed his plans for an Iraqi conference on February 28 with Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Crumpton (ref A), and more recently with Senator McCain on March 26 (ref B). The King's cousin and advisor for religious affairs, Prince Ghazi, is taking the lead role in organizing the conference. The King hoped that Iraqi religious leaders would find ways to defuse tensions between Iraq's religious and ethnic groups, and that Muslim religious figures at the conference would denounce extremist misinterpretations of Islam and reaffirm Islamic principles against sectarian violence and in support of toleration. Prince Ghazi told the Ambassador March 21 that the GoJ has secured the participation of all key Iraqi Muslim sects and tribal groups. A variety of Shi'ite groups will be present, including representatives of Ayatollah al-Sistani. Prince Ghazi indicated that the GoJ believes success of the conference hinges upon agreement beforehand on the final statement to be issued, and the GoJ is confident that such agreement is already in hand.

[1](#)3. (SBU) According to local media, the King discussed the conference with Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari in early March. The recent summit of Arab League leaders in Khartoum also welcomed Jordan's proposal to host Iraqi religious and tribal leaders in Amman (ref C).

[1](#)4. (SBU) NOTE: The GOJ attempted to host publicly Iraqi Sunni figures, including tribal leaders, at a November 2004 conference, but the event was canceled due to operations in Fallujah (ref E). The GOJ maintains regular private contacts with a wide range of Iraqis. END NOTE.

[1](#)5. (SBU) COMMENT: The GoJ is attempting to build on previous religious-tolerance endeavors. In July 2005 King Abdullah hosted the International Islamic Conference on "True Islam"

and in November 2004, the King presented the
"Amman Message" which rejected religious extremism and
terrorism and promoted moderation, tolerance and dialogue
(ref D). END COMMENT.

HALE